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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD JCS review completed

23 JUN 1983

SUBJECT: NSPG Meeting of 21 June 1983

NSC review completed.

1. The NSPG met on Lebanon from 0945-1045 hours on 21 June 1983. Per the agenda (attached), Judge Clark led off with a few introductory remarks, saying in essence that the meeting was called to discuss a) the Israeli request (relayed by David Kimche) that a partial withdrawal be considered, and b) how to deal with Syrian intransigence on the withdrawal issue. With regard to the former, a central consideration is how the Multi National Force (MNF) should be moved into the void created by the Israeli withdrawal. The DCI then presented an intelligence assessment, a digest of which is attached.

2. Secretary Shultz then spoke, saying that he wanted first to establish what our strategy should be and then go into tactical considerations such as deployment of the Multi-National Force (MNF) into the area from which the Israelis withdraw. Broadly speaking, said the Secretary, there are three objectives to which the President has adhered since the start of the Lebanese War in June 1982:

a. There should be a total withdrawal of all foreign armed forces from Lebanon.

b. Lebanon's sovereignty and independence should be restored.

c. Israel's northern border should be made secure.

3. The Secretary saw two broad courses of action for the U.S. to pursue at this juncture. The first would be to continue as we are doing, that is, seeking to drum up and/or maintain support for the withdrawal agreement. There are indications that the Saudis are willing to put up five to six billion dollars to persuade the Syrians to come along. We could let the situation play itself along until the Jumayyil and Begin visits in late July and see what develops. The problem with this course is that the Israelis with their virtual open announcement that they are going for partial withdrawal have cut ground out from under us. The Syrians can now say to the other Arabs that their strategy is working: that the Israelis will eventually pull out of Lebanon anyway--without there having to be a withdrawal agreement. Further, the U.S. is finding it hard to sustain the argument that an Israeli withdrawal will bring about a Syrian

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withdrawal. The Israelis for their part have been very restrained in reacting to Syrian provocations, and it is hard to imagine this will continue for another five weeks until the Begin visit. A surgical strike into the Bekaa is an obvious option. In short, there are some real risks to a "rocking along" policy.

4. The second course would be for the U.S. to reengage itself in Lebanon, focussing on the withdrawal issue. The objective would be to obtain a "date certain" by which time Israel, Syria and the PLO would all have completed withdrawal. The Saudis would have to be approached, to see if they are willing to put up their chips. The U.S. would have to "cement in" their total involvement and participation. The Syrians would be told that their withdrawal should not be considered as locked to an Israeli withdrawal agreement. In a sense, it could be portrayed as a victory for Syria. The Israelis would be told that we are not proposing a renegotiation of the agreement. However, because of developments, the side letter (copy attached) will not stand up and must be altered. We could not expect them to change one condition, that is, the return of prisoners/bodies. In sum, the agreement would be put into effect in reverse: the security arrangements would go into effect with the start of the withdrawal, but only after withdrawal is completed would the ratification instruments be exchanged and the normalization measures go into effect. The Saudis, the Secretary noted, say that the Syrians regard the latter point as particularly important.

5. The second course, the Secretary noted, is consistent with the President's three objectives (para 2 above). If this strategy is agreed upon, the following tactical moves should take place. We should go to the Saudis first. A leak would be ruinous, but the Saudis can keep secrets, and the approach should be to Fahd alone. The next step would be to go to Begin. The person chosen to do that would spend as much time as necessary for the Israelis to become comfortable with the concept.

6. The Secretary concluded his presentation by saying he favored the second course. The impending Israeli withdrawal, instead of being a step on the way to a dig-in line would be a step on the way to a full withdrawal. The MNF, which was originally deployed into a friendly area, now faces a different prospect: in effect the MNF is being asked to take casualties in the place of the IDF. It is necessary for the "concept" of MNF deployment be changed, so that the MNF, in moving into the vacated areas, (i.e. the Shuf and Alayh) moves into a better environment than exists now.

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7. General Vessey then spoke, stating that he would add three more broad objectives to those cited by the Secretary:

- a. Train and equip the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).
- b. Create conditions for furthering the President's 1 September 1982 peace plan.
- c. Avoid a superpower confrontation in the area.

8. General Vessey then gave a review of the progress made by the U.S. to date with the LAF. A total of 170 armored vehicles have been provided with another 250 to come. In addition, there have been 800 trucks, 1400 radios and a quantity of weapons. Eight MTT's have been operating in Lebanon and 11 of 18 LAF battalions have completed their battalion training programs. Four new battalions have been created and one of these will be trained by the end of July. Of the four LAF brigades, two are ready for deployment. In short, the LAF is in a better readiness posture than the Lebanese Government gives it credit for. General Vessey said he strongly favors the Secretary's proposal. Here the Secretary interjected that it will be necessary to try to strike a deal between the Phalange and the Druze in order to ease the MNF-LAF deployment into the Shuf-Alayh area.

9. The President noted that the USSR believes that as a superpower it should be involved in any negotiated settlement in Lebanon. Given this goal, he wondered to what extent the USSR would seek to put a monkey wrench into U.S. efforts. The President added he remained stubbornly against letting the Soviets have any negotiating role.

10. The Secretary said that the essence of the problem is whether we can put together a package which is attractive enough to Asad. If this were the case, the Soviets would probably not be able to block an agreement, as Asad is a rather independent individual. A companion problem is whether the Israelis would buy such a package.

11. Ambassador Kirpatrick spoke of the UNIFIL situation, noting that one more extension is probably the most that can be hoped for. The Soviets will seek to pare this extension down from three months. In short, UNIFIL may not be around any more after early fall.

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12. Concluding the meeting, Judge Clark said that there seemed to be a consensus of the group in favor of the Secretary's proposal. Defense and the Joint Chiefs were in support. A specific plan of approach should now be drawn up. The Secretary said he would provide a plan before his departure. One possibility would be for Philip Habib to contact the parties (other than Syria). Another possibility would be for Kenneth Dam to lead a team to the Middle East. The latter option would be difficult, however, with the Secretary also out of the country between 17 June and 6 July.

13. The President inquired about the possibility of an armed attack being mounted against the MNF and whether the U.S. is positioned to counter such an attack. General Vessey said there is a carrier never more than 48 hours away plus gunfire support ships close by. The problem with use of the latter is that innocent civilians could be hit. Ambassador Habib observed that a military attack against the MNF could not be put together without our having sufficient advance warning to counter it. The principal danger would be from small-scale hit and run attacks.



Chief, Near East and
South Asia Division

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Attachment

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SECRETSystem II
90765National Security Planning Group Meeting

Tuesday, June 21, 1983

MIDDLE EAST

A g e n d a

- I. Introduction (5 minutes) William P. Clark
- II. Intelligence Assessment (15 min.) William J. Casey
 - A. Israeli domestic political scene
 - B. Lebanese scene
 - 1) Prospects for the Gemayel Government
 - 2) The Druze and Phalange
 - 3) Shia unrest in the South
 - 4) Factional fighting in the North
 - C. Palestinian reaction to Israeli withdrawal
 - D. The Syrian perspective
 - E. Soviet objectives following the Lebanon-Israeli agreement
- III. Policy Options (20 min.) George P. Shultz
 - A. Responding to Israeli-Lebanese proposals for partial withdrawal
 - B. Strategy for Syria
- IV. Options for future mission and deployments of the MNF (15 min.) Caspar Weinberger
- V. Summary The President

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Jerusalem, May 17, 1983

Dear Ambassador Draper,

This is to confirm that it is the position of Israel that the implementation of the Agreement between Israel and Lebanon signed this date is premised on the following:

- the receipt of information concerning Israeli soldiers missing in action and the return of Israeli prisoners of war held by Syria, Israelis held by the "PLO" and the remains of Israeli soldiers who have fallen since June 4, 1982, prior to the commencement of the Israeli withdrawal pursuant to the Agreement;
- the withdrawal of all PLO armed elements from Lebanon; and
- the withdrawal of Syrian forces simultaneously with the Israeli withdrawal.

The withdrawal of all PLO armed elements from Lebanon is consistent with the relevant provisions of Article 4.2 of the Agreement.

In the event such returns and withdrawals do not take place on schedule, Israel will be at liberty to suspend performance of its obligations under the Agreement. In that event, Israel, Lebanon and the United States will consult on an urgent basis. If the matter remains unresolved, Israel will be at liberty to declare the Agreement null and void. Israel will continue to ensure its security in all appropriate ways.

Sincerely,

David Kimche
David Kimche
Director General
Ministry of Foreign Affairs